

*Governor's Review Copy*

# Washington State Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2016



Zero Deaths &  
Zero Serious Injuries  
by 2030

# Tribes and Target Zero

From 2012–2014, 63 American Indians and Alaskan Natives (AIANs) died in traffic crashes according to the national Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) database. FARS records race and ethnicity from Washington Death Certificates; this information is used to calculate race-specific death rates. Using data from 2005–2014, which represents 267 AIAN traffic deaths, to produce a reliable population rate estimate, the AIAN traffic fatality rate is 27.6 deaths per 100,000 people in the population. This rate is more than three times higher than the next highest death rate.

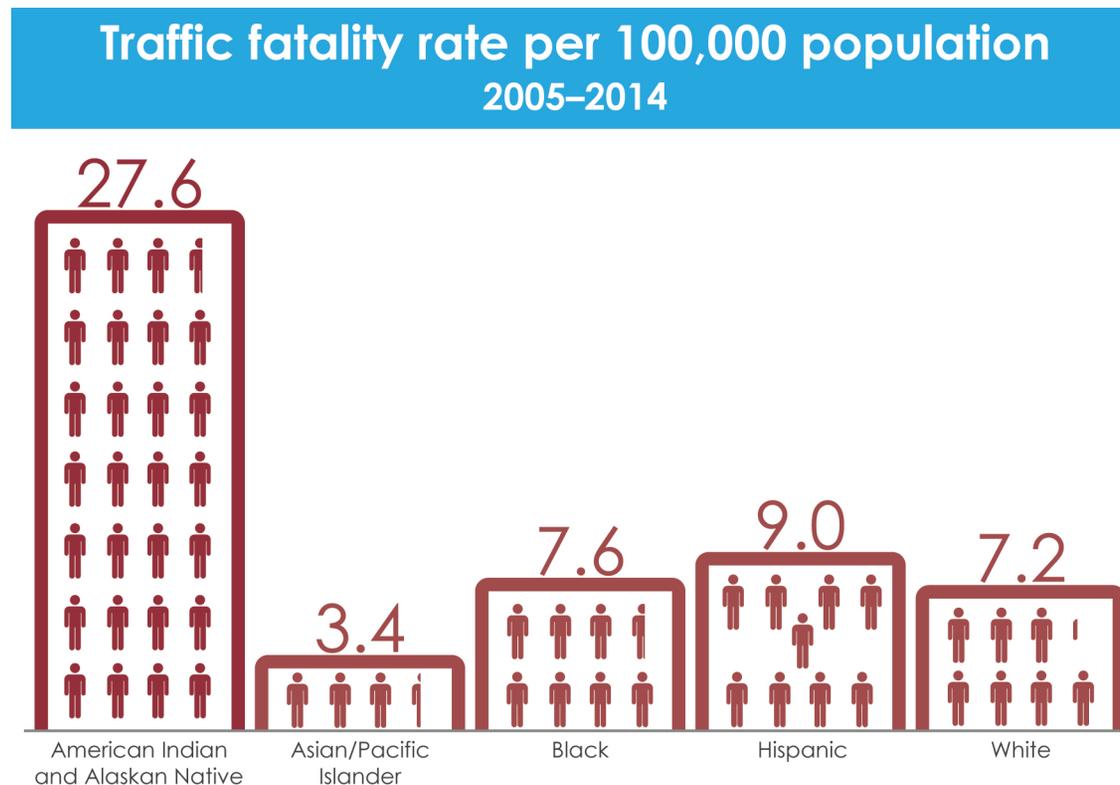
In addition to calculating death rates based on race/ethnicity, the tribal traffic safety community and partners also analyzed fatal and serious crash events occurring on reservations. From 2012–2014, there were 66 fatalities occurring on reservations, of which 21 (32%) were AIAN deaths. There were also 187 serious injuries on reservation roads. Since race/ethnicity is gathered from death certificates, it is unknown how many of the 187 serious injuries were AIANs.

## Overview

There are twenty-nine federally-recognized Tribes in Washington State. Through the Centennial Accord, the State of Washington and Tribes have formally committed to working together on a government-to-government basis to address a number of common problems, including traffic safety issues.

Today, Tribes play a vital role and are active partners with other agencies in addressing the goals identified in Target Zero. Transportation planning and engineering, as well as the human

factors of traffic safety on tribal lands, are important areas of focus in our state. Reservations in Washington often include a mix of Tribal, state, county, city, and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) roads, which creates jurisdictional complexities with law enforcement, EMS, crash reporting, road maintenance, and capital safety projects. Additionally, many tribes in the state hold properties that are non-contiguous to their reservations and provide vital services to their communities.



To address this complex mix of jurisdictions and experts, Tribes have multiple forums that meet regularly for transportation and traffic safety issues. The Tribal Traffic Safety Advisory Board is dedicated to Tribal traffic safety issues. The Board meets monthly to discuss Tribal traffic safety concerns and partnership opportunities, and to implement projects identified through its strategic planning. Its members include Tribal leaders, planners, law enforcement, and representatives from WTSC and WSDOT. Other, more general forums that occasionally address Tribal traffic safety issues include:

- The Washington Indian Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (WITPAC)
- Tribal Transportation Planning Organization (TTPO)
- The Northwest Association of Tribal Law Enforcement Officers (NATEO)
- Northwest Tribal Technical Assistance Program (NWTTAP)

### Fatalities and serious injuries on reservations

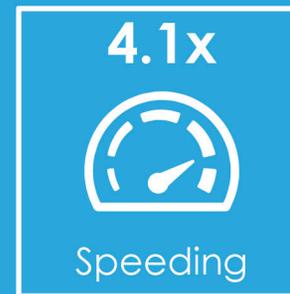
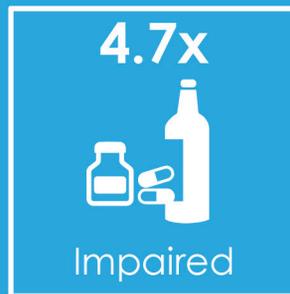
Through a partnership with the BIA and using US Census data, WSDOT was able to include reservation boundaries in its data collection and reporting program. Of the 63 AIAN crash deaths from 2012–2014, 21 (32%) occurred on reservations. Target Zero partners suspect that this number is underreported due to gaps in data sharing between the State and Tribes. Additionally, several Tribal representatives have shared that the number of fatalities and serious injuries occurring on their reservations in the recent past exceeded what has been reported to the state.

The table below shows the over-representation of American Indians and Alaskan Native fatalities by county. These counties reflect higher AIAN proportion of traffic fatalities compared to the proportion of AIAN population.

County	Percent American Indian and Alaskan Native Population	Percent American Indian and Alaskan Native Traffic Fatalities
Clallam	5.3%	13.7%
Ferry	17.6%	25.0%
Grays Harbor	4.9%	9.2%
Jefferson	2.4%	5.1%
Kitsap	1.7%	4.0%
Lincoln	1.7%	7.1%
Okanogan	12.0%	26.4%
Pierce	1.6%	3.7%
Spokane	1.5%	4.1%
Stevens	5.7%	8.0%
Walla Walla	1.1%	8.2%
Whatcom	3.0%	5.7%
Whitman	0.8%	3.6%
Yakima	5.3%	24.1%



American Indian and Alaskan Natives have higher death rates involving high risk factors than other races. For example, the rate of AIAN unrestrained vehicle occupant deaths per 100,000 population are more than seven times higher than other races combined.



### Data challenges: how different data sources tell different stories

Target Zero partners used three data sets in order to tell the most complete story possible about American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) traffic fatalities and serious injuries in Washington:

- **Statewide fatality rates for AIANs.** This data is based on ethnicity derived from state death certificates and provides traffic fatality data for the entire State of Washington, regardless of jurisdiction. This data is captured using the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS).
- **On-reservation fatalities.** This data is captured by focusing on crashes occurring on roadways located within reservation boundaries. This data set includes all recorded fatalities and serious injuries occurring on these lands, regardless of the race/ethnicity of the people involved.
- **Fatality proportion compared to population proportion.** The population data estimates of race/ethnicity are produced by the US Census Bureau.

Data gaps continue to exist, and in some cases the data sources tell a conflicting story. Pedestrian fatalities are a prime example. Fatality information that considers ethnicity based on death certificates from crashes occurring both on and off reservations is in alignment with national data and anecdotal information from tribal representatives: pedestrian safety is a significant issue among American Indian and Alaskan Native people. That data source shows that the pedestrian fatality rates are five times higher for AIANs than non-AIANs.

However, crash information that considers the location of crashes on reservations, regardless of ethnicity, indicates that pedestrian safety is a lower priority. Pedestrian fatalities occurring on reservation lands comprised just 7.6% of the fatalities and serious injuries. Target Zero partners believe that this demonstrates significant under-reporting of fatalities and serious injuries occurring on non-state roadways within reservations. This interpretation (under-reporting) is in alignment with information from WSDOT on the identity of reporting law enforcement agencies.

Based on this analysis and diagnosis, Target Zero partners believe that pedestrian safety is a significant issue for American Indians and Alaskan Natives in Washington, both on- and off-reservation. Despite the rural character of many reservations, a high percentage of the residents walk, bicycle, and use other non-motorized transportation. Unfortunately, several factors on reservation roads can create unsafe conditions and contribute to the disproportionate fatality rates:

- Minimal availability of transit services
- Lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and street lights
- High speeds
- Lack of enforcement due to staffing and geography

## Differences in Tribal Target Zero priorities

Many of the Tribal categories end up in the same Priority Level as the overall population. However, major differences between Tribal Target Zero priorities and overall Target Zero priorities include:

- Unrestrained occupants are a priority 1 instead of priority 2.
- Unlicensed drivers are a priority 1 instead of a priority 2.
- Heavy trucks are a priority 2 instead of priority 3.
- Older drivers are a priority 3 instead of a priority 2.

## How Target Zero determined Tribal priorities

To focus efforts on eliminating deaths and serious injuries on our state's roadways, Target Zero partners grouped the primary factors found in statewide fatal and serious traffic crashes into priority levels one, two, and three. The levels are based on the percentage of traffic fatalities and serious injuries associated with each factor in 2012–2014. This chapter looks at just the subset of data that includes reservation roads in order to set Tribal Target Zero priorities. It uses the same cut-off points for priority levels as the statewide figures do.

Priority level one includes the factors associated with the largest number of fatalities or serious injuries occurring on reservations. Each of these factors was involved in at least 30% of traffic fatalities or serious injuries occurring on reservations.

Priority level two factors, while frequent, are not as common as priority level one factors. Level two factors were seen in at least 10% of traffic fatalities or serious injuries, but fewer than 30%.

Priority level three factors are associated with less than 10% of fatalities and serious injuries occurring on reservations.

## Tribal Target Zero Priorities

Given the disproportionately high rate of American Indian and Alaskan Native fatalities in Washington, it's important that the priorities in Target Zero are tailored to meet Tribal needs. Recently, several Tribes throughout Washington State received funding under the federal Tribal Transportation Program in MAP-21 and the FAST Act to develop their own Traffic Safety Plans for their reservations. The unique priorities of individual tribes are reflected in those plans. Based on fatalities and serious injuries that have occurred on reservation roads statewide, the overall Tribal Priorities are as follows:

Fatalities and serious injuries occurring on reservation roads in Washington State 2012–2014	Fatalities			Serious Injuries		
	# of People	% of total for all fatalities on reservations	% of this emphasis area for fatalities on all Washington State roads	# of People	% of Total for all serious injuries on reservations	% of this emphasis area for serious injuries on all Washington State roads
<b>Priority Level One</b>						
Impairment Involved	42	63.6%	56.6%	46	24.6%	22.3%
Lane Departure	39	59.1%	56.1%	85	45.5%	38.5%
Unrestrained Vehicle Occupants	28	42.4%	22.2%	81	43.3%	10.2%
Intersection Related	14	21.2%	20.7%	59	31.6%	34.8%
Young Driver Aged 16–25 Involved	21	31.8%	31.7%	54	28.9%	33.6%
Speeding Involved	21	31.8%	38.0%	45	24.1%	26.5%
Unlicensed Driver Involved	20	30.3%	18.6%	-	-	-
<b>Priority Level Two</b>						
Distraction Involved	19	28.8%	29.5%	43	23.0%	22.9%
Motorcyclists	8	12.1%	16.8%	19	10.2%	18.1%
Heavy Truck Involved	6	9.1%	9.1%	25	13.4%	5.2%
Pedestrians*	5	7.6%	15.3%	14	7.5%	14.8%
<b>Priority Level Three</b>						
Older Drivers 70+ Involved	3	4.5%	12.1%	15	8.0%	8.6%
Drowsy Driver Involved	3	4.5%	2.9%	10	5.4%	3.2%
Bicyclists	0	0.0%	2.2%	5	2.7%	4.8%

\* Data based on the ethnicity of the fatal person show that 21% of American Indian and Alaskan Native fatalities (occurring anywhere in the state) are pedestrians.

## Programs and successes

### Suquamish Tribal Police's Drug Recognition Experts (DREs)

Data from 2012–2014 show that impairment is the most common contributing factor (64%) in fatalities and serious injuries on reservation roads statewide. Of those impaired, 26% were impaired by alcohol, while 44% were both impaired by alcohol and positive for drugs. Another 31% were positive for one or more drugs. Among traffic fatalities occurring on tribal reservations in Washington State, not counting alcohol, cannabis was the most frequently occurring drug, followed by central nervous system stimulants (methamphetamine, cocaine) and narcotic analgesics (pain killers, heroin).

Ten years ago, a Suquamish Tribe police officer (now a Deputy Chief) received training and became certified as a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE). A DRE is a law enforcement officer trained to recognize impairment in drivers who are positive for drugs other than, or in addition to, alcohol. DREs have specialized training to identify the symptoms of intoxication for seven different categories of drugs. They conduct a 12-step standardized and systematic examination of persons arrested or suspected of drug-positive driving or similar offenses. A DRE's expert opinion on a case improves the entire process to identify, arrest, and prosecute impaired drivers for their crimes. Currently there are more than 230 DREs in Washington who perform more than 1,600 evaluations annually.

The rigorous training and certification maintenance requirements call for a significant commitment on the part of the individual and the law enforcement agency. The Suquamish Police Department has a DRE instructor and a DRE in training to become an instructor. They are often called on by neighboring jurisdictions to conduct evaluations.

One year later the Suquamish Tribe police officer became a DRE, the Suquamish Tribe used a grant from their drug court to host a DRE class at the Clearwater Casino, which is now an annual location for the Spring DRE class for all law officers, including non-Tribal. Since then, a second Suquamish Tribe police officer has received this certification, making them the only two DRE's operating on Tribal reservations in Washington State.

Representatives of the Northwest Association of Tribal Enforcement Officers (NATEO)



## Data challenges and improvements for American Indians and Alaskan Natives and traffic data

Having accurate data is key to identifying safety problems, selecting appropriate countermeasures, and evaluating performance. Without data, the evaluation, analysis, and diagnosis of traffic safety becomes more difficult. It's also more difficult for Tribes to compete for safety funding and justify their needs if they lack supporting data.

Given the disproportionate impact of traffic crashes on Tribal communities, it is critical that we close these gaps and use data to help identify and address problems. Some of these challenges are described below.

### Reporting

It's important for Tribes and the state to share data on traffic crashes, fatalities, and serious injuries. It will allow both Tribes and state agencies to have a comprehensive picture of traffic safety issues. Tribal attorneys, law enforcement, WSP, and WTSC are working together to resolve concerns with data sharing across jurisdictions. Notably, eTRIP managers and Tribal representatives with expertise in jurisdictional and contractual law, policing procedures, and information technologies are working to remove obstacles to data sharing through contractual and computer programming remedies.

### Roadway Jurisdiction

Through a partnership with the BIA, WSDOT was able to include reservation boundaries in its data collection and reporting program, and can now identify whether a crash occurred within a specific reservation. Additional information is still needed regarding roadway ownership. Target Zero partners want to work with Tribes to identify tribally owned road networks.

## Nooksack Mobility and Safety Education Program

Thirty percent of fatalities or serious injuries occurring on reservation roads in 2012–2014 involved an unlicensed driver. Tribal representatives report limited access to driver education programs on or near their reservations. To help address several traffic safety needs, the Nooksack Tribe is developing a Safety Mobility Education Program. The goal of this project is to establish a holistic approach to educating communities about all modes of transportation. The program includes instruction in operating a vehicle, walking, biking, and busing. A component part of the Mobility Safety Education Program will be a public awareness program that will address:

- Impaired driving
- Unlicensed driving
- Occupant protection
- Distracted driving
- Sharing the road and with motorcyclists, pedestrians, and bicyclists
- Bicycle Safety
- Water/land foot traffic safety

It will also cover alternative transportation services, designated driving programs, and alternative ride programs. The Nooksack Tribe plans to begin offering classes in Spring and Fall 2016.

# Protecting our future generations

## Culturally appropriate traffic safety materials

The WTSC's Tribal Traffic Safety Advisory Board developed and distributed culturally relevant traffic safety educational materials. They sent these materials to volunteer contacts from each of the 29 federally recognized tribes in October 2015. The materials included posters, rackcards, vinyl banners, and brief videos covering the five top factors contributing to AIANs dying in traffic crashes. On behalf of the BIA, NHTSA requested and received electronic files of the print materials to allow any tribe in the US to customize these educational materials for their communities. The project was highlighted during the 2015 National Tribal Transportation Conference. Print materials will be available during Washington's 2016 Canoe Journey, hosted by the Nisqually Tribe.

Videos and materials are available on [WTSC's Programs and Priorities page for Tribes](#).

## NATEO grants help Washington's Tribal Police get funding and equipment for traffic safety

Tribal police in Washington are an important partner in reducing the disproportionate traffic fatality rate of AIAN people. For several years NATEO, through the Chehalis Tribal Police Department, has been administering \$40,000 worth of grants to tribal police departments each year. These grants have funded important traffic safety equipment purchases and enabled officers to receive traffic safety training.



**Our children are our future generations; they hold our values, traditions and culture. We must protect them in appropriate child car seats.**

Developed by the Tribal Traffic Safety Advisory Board; funded by the Washington Traffic Safety Commission.